

# Gwendolyn M. Carter, 72, Coppin State administrator

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**G**wendolyn M. Carter, a longtime Coppin State College administrator who helped organize many of the school's formal functions, died Tuesday of lung failure at her West Baltimore home.

During a 30-year career at the West Baltimore school, Miss Carter, 72, was head cafeteria dietitian, director of special events and director of community relations.

Miss Carter, who lived in the Ashburton community in West Baltimore, was always proper and prim, and believed in strict attention to etiquette at school affairs.

For instance, friends said that for formal and even semiformal functions she insisted on printed invitations, shunned paper and plastic plates for china and made sure a guest book was handy to record the attendance.

"That's just the way she was, always a lady the way she acted, looked and expected others to act," said Shirley Stokes, Coppin's director of planning and accreditation who met Miss Carter at the school in 1961.

Miss Carter went to work at what was then Coppin Teachers' College in 1955 as the dietitian for a full-service cafeteria where she oversaw food preparation and presentation.

In 1965, she became director of special events, organizing all of the school's functions, from concerts to balls to the elegant presidential banquets. In 1975, she was named the school's director of community relations. She retired in 1985.

Friends said Miss Carter seemed to relish her job as special events director, working long hours and poring over details.

"She was known for her white gloves and the grace she showed in doing and handling the affairs," said her cousin Jacqueline Williams of Baltimore. "She always believed that there was a certain protocol that should accompany certain activities."

For example, once a caterer set tables for a formal luncheon at the school the next day. The only problem, at least according to Miss Carter, was that the cloth napkins were wrinkled.

"So she and I took those napkins home that night and ironed them and brought them back the next day," Ms. Stokes said. "She was always one to follow the proper protocol. She believed in going the extra mile."

A Baltimore native, Miss Carter graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in 1943.

Miss Carter was hospitalized in 1943 for a collapsed lung, and doctors thought she would not live past 30, Ms. Williams said. "But she surprised all of them through determination," Ms. Williams said.

In 1947, Miss Carter graduated from Morgan State College, where her major was home economics. She later took graduate courses at Loyola College.

In addition to her administrative duties, Miss Carter was known at Coppin for her rapport with students.

Calvin Burnett, Coppin State's president, recalled an uneasy meeting he had with a group of students when he became president in 1970.

"I handled it like a green president would handle it, and they [the students] weren't satisfied," Dr. Burnett said. "Then she [Miss Carter] addressed them, and they seemed to listen to her. I was quite impressed.

"She was very gracious and a very giving person," Dr. Burnett said. "She was one of the best people you could ever meet."

Miss Carter was a member of the W.N.M. Social Club and the Enon Baptist Church in West Baltimore since 1935.

Services were held Friday.

Survivors include an aunt, Frieda Spencer of Baltimore; and five other cousins, Norma L. Felder of Baltimore, Kim Leftwich of Ulster Park, N.Y., Scott Spencer of Fayetteville, N.C., Brian Spencer of Fort Dix, N.J. and John Spencer of Virginia Beach, Va.

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